

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."

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VOL. I.

A BRIEF HISTORIC VIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

(Continued from p. 20.)

CENTURY IV.

Hitherto Christianity had been established and propagated in the world, not only independently of all human contrivance and support, but in opposition to every species of worldly authority. During the long course of three hundred years, the church had been exposed to the malice and power of its numerous formidable enemies. It had sustained the fiery trial of ten persecutions, and the various efforts which had been made to extinguish or depress it. But instead of sinking under the weight of these calamities, the numbers of the disciples were every where multiplied, and the limits of Christianity were progressively enlarged. Early, however, in the fourth century, a different scene began to be presented. About the year 312, Constantine the Great, having defeated the tyrant Maxentius, granted to the Christians full liberty to live according to their own institutions; and soon afterwards himself embraced the Christian religion. Various reasons might concur in producing this important event. The Christians were, at this period, the most powerful, though not the most numerous party. Arnobius, (in Gentes, lib. i.) who wrote immediately before Constantine's accession to the imperial throne, speaks of the whole world as filled with the doctrine of Christ,

of an innumerable body of Christians in distant provinces, and of their progressive increase in all countries. The evident tendency of Christianity to promote the stability of government, by enforcing the obedience of the people, and the general practice of virtue, doubtless, also, contributed to increase this favourable impression on the mind of Constantine. And, what is more to his honour, it is probable that, in process of time, he acquired more extensive views of the excellence and importance of the Christian Religion, and gradually arrived at an entire conviction of its divine origin. About the year 324, when in consequence of the defeat and death of Licinius, he remained sole lord of the Roman Empire, Constantine openly avowed his opposition to Paganism. From that period, he earnestly exhorted all his subjects to embrace the Gospel; and at length, toward the close of his reign, zealously employed the resources of his genius, the authority of his laws, and the influence of his liberality to complete the destruction of the Pagan superstitions, and to establish Christianity in every part of the empire. The sons of Constantine imitated the zeal of their father, as did all his successors in this century, with the exception of the apostate Julian, whose insidious attempts to restore the rites of Paganism occasioned a short interruption to the triumphant progress of Christianity. These were, however, speedily counterbalanced by the renewed efforts of Jovian, and the succeeding emperors, to the

time of Theodosius the Great, (A. D. 379.) The activity and determination of this illustrious prince were exerted in the most effectual manner in the extirpation of Pagan idolatry and superstition, and in the establishment and advancement of Christianity; so that, toward the close of this century, the religion of the Gentiles seemed to be fast tending towards neglect and extinction.* The severe edicts, and the violent means which were otherwise employed to effect this important purpose, must unquestionably be condemned. But it must be remembered, that Christianity cannot be justly chargeable with the errors of its friends, and that the wise and tolerant maxims which are now so generally acknowledged were not then sufficiently known, or were erroneously deemed inapplicable to the gross superstition of the Gentiles. But if such were the zeal of Constantine and his successors in the cause of Christianity, we cannot be surprised at its successful extension amongst many barbarous and uncivilized nations.

During this century the province of Armenia which had probably been, in some measure, visited with the light of Christianity at its first rise, became completely illuminated. This change was chiefly produced by the labours of Gregory, commonly called the *Enlightener*.

In Persia also, which is supposed to have contained many Christians even in the first and second centuries, the Gospel was, during

* The language of St. Jerome strongly conveys this idea. "Solitudinem patitur et in urbe gentilitas. Dii quondam nationum, cum bubonibus et noctuis, in solis culminibus remanserunt." Jer. ad. Lect. Ep. 57.

the present, more extensively propagated.

Towards the middle of this century (A. D. 333.) Frumentius, an inhabitant of Egypt, carried the knowledge of Christianity to a people of Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, whose capital was Auxumis. He baptized their king, together with several persons of the highest rank in his court; and returning into Egypt, was consecrated by St. Athanasius, the first bishop of that country where he afterwards preached with great success. The church thus founded in Abyssinia continues to this day, and still considers herself as a daughter of Alexandria.

Christianity was introduced into the province of Iberia, between the Euxine and the Caspian Seas, and called Georgia, by means of a female captive, during the reign of Constantine, whose pious and, as it is asserted,† miraculous endowments so deeply impressed the king and queen, that they abandoned idolatry, and sent to Constantinople for proper persons to instruct them and their subjects in the knowledge of the Christian religion.

Soon after the death of Constantine, his son Constantius sent an embassy to a people called Homeritæ, supposed to have been the ancient Sabæans and the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, dwelling in Arabia Felix. One of the principal ambassadors was Theophilus, an Indian, who, in his youth had been sent as an hostage to Constantine from the inhabitants of the Island Diu; and, settling at Rome, led a monastic life, and ob-

† By Rufinus, and after him by Socrates, Sozomez, and Theodoret. See Jortin, *Ecclesiastical Remarks*, vol. ii.

tained a great reputation for sanctity. By this missionary, the Gospel was preached to the Homeritæ; the king and many of the people were converted, and Christianity was established in their country. After this, Theophilus went to Diu, and in his way passed through many regions of India, where the Gospel was already received, and where he rectified some irregularities in practice. Both Theophilus, however, and these Indian Christians, were Arians. (Jortin. vol. ii.)

During the reign of the Emperor Valens, a large body of the Goths, who had remained attached to their ancient superstitions, notwithstanding the previous conversion of some of their countrymen, were permitted, by that prince, to pass the Danube, and to inhabit Dacia, Mœcia, and Thrace, on condition of living subjects to the Roman Laws, and of embracing Christianity. This condition was accordingly accepted by their king Fritigern. The celebrated Ulphilas, bishop of those Goths who dwelt in Mœsia, contributed greatly to their improvement, by *translating the four Gospels* into the Gothic language.

Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the Christian Bishops in the European provinces of the empire, great numbers of Pagans still remained. In Gaul, however, the labours of the venerable Martin of Tours were so successful in the destruction of idolatry and superstition and the propagation of Christianity, that he justly acquired the honourable title of *the Apostle of the Gauls*.

The authority and the examples of Constantine and his imperial successors probably tended greatly to the progress of the Christian

religion during this century. But it is, at the same time, undeniable, that the *indefatigable zeal of the bishops* and other pious men, the *sanctity of their lives*, the *intrinsic excellence of Christianity*, the *various translations* of the Sacred Writings, and the supernatural powers which, though greatly diminished, probably still existed, in some measure, in the Church, must be allowed to have most materially contributed to this extraordinary success.*

(To be continued.)

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Concluded from p. 24.

AFRICA.

Bible Society of the Mauritius, Bourbon, and Dependencies.

A society was formed under this designation, on Nov. 11, 1812. the Governor of the Island, President.

* The author has expressed himself doubtfully on the subject of the continuance of miraculous powers in the fourth century. For, although he can by no means assent to the opinions of those who maintain, that, at this period, miracles had entirely ceased—he has no hesitation in saying, that after the second century, but especially after the æra of Constantine, the accounts of miracles, which were transmitted to us by ecclesiastical historians and others must be received with caution: and the evidence, which they adduce to their support, be examined with care. Some of these accounts may be safely admitted to be true, while many others must be entirely rejected. In general, it may be observed, that the circumstances attending these relations, and the nature of the objects in support of which miracles are stated to have been wrought, are sufficient to direct a discerning and impartial reader in his judgment respecting them. This is the medium which is pursued by Mosheim, and by the learned author of the “Remarks on Ecclesiastical History;” neither of whom will be suspected of any tendency to enthusiasm.

From this establishment, good hopes may be entertained that something extensive and effectual will be done for the benefit of these and the neighbouring Islands.

Auxiliary Bible Society at St. Helena.

About the commencement of the year 1814, an Auxiliary Society was formed on this Island, under respectable patronage; the first communication from which was accompanied with a contribution of 160*l.* sterling to the Funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

America.

That the influence of the British and Foreign Bible Society should be felt in America, was naturally to be expected: and it has accordingly produced the formation of numerous Bible Societies in that portion of the world.

Domestic Proceedings.

The Domestic transactions of the **BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY** are of too miscellaneous a nature to admit of such an arrangement as will communicate an adequate idea of their nature and extent. They may, however, be generally noticed under the two following heads:

I. Assistance offered to other Associations having the same object.

The sum of 1100*l.* and 1000 Testaments, have been presented to the *Hibernian Bible Society at Dublin*; the sum of 200*l.* has also been granted to the *Cork Bible Society*; a grant of 100*l.* has been made to the *Bible Committee of the Synod of Ulster*; 500 Bibles and 2500 Testaments to the *Derry Bible Society*; and 250 Bibles and 1000 Testaments to the *Bible So-*

ciety at New Ross in Ireland. The first two have likewise been supplied with copies of the Scriptures, at the Cost Prices, to a very considerable extent; the others have the like privilege; and other Charitable Institutions have been accommodated with still greater advantages.

II. The Supply of Copies of the Scriptures, either Bibles or New Testaments, in various languages, for Sale or Distribution, according to the circumstances of the several cases.

AT HOME.

To the French, Danish, American, and other prisoners of war, in Great Britain, and returning in carrels. To the convicts at the several depots, and on their voyage to New South Wales. To the prisoners in Newgate and other jails throughout England. To the Refuge for the Destitute, the London Female Penitentiary, and the Female Penitentiaries at Bath and Plymouth. To the poor in hospitals and work-houses. To the poor sufferers by the great fire at Chudleigh. To foreign soldiers and their children, and to Foreign seamen at various depots and sea-ports. To the naval and military hospitals and guard houses, and for sale, at reduced prices, to soldiers and sailors. To the crews of revenue cutters and of the post office packets. To several regiments of Irish militia. To poor Roman Catholics in Cumberland. To the poor of several parishes in the Presbytery of Glasgow, in consideration of the collections made for the society. To the Gaelic schools in the highlands of Scotland. To the Isles of Mann, Sark, Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney. To the poor in Ireland, at very reduced prices. To poor Irish in London. To the Sunday, and numerous other schools for the poor in Ireland. To Dutch loyalists on their return to Holland. To Catholic schools for the poor in Glasgow. To the schools on board the hulks in Langston Harbour. To poor Highlanders in London.

ABROAD.

Europe.

To the British prisoners at eleven depots in France; two donations, consisting of 2,300 Bibles, and 3,800 Testaments. To the foreign troops at various stations. To the poor, both Protestants and Roman

Catholics, in Denmark, Holstein, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Lapland, Russia, Tartary, Courland, Livonia, Prussia, Poland, Silesia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Gallia, Alsace, and Switzerland. To Iceland. To the poor German Colonists on the Banks of the Walga. To France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Canary Islands. To Madeira, Gibraltar, the Morea, Malta, Naples, Sicily, Cefalonia, Turkey, Greece, and the Greek Islands. To prisoners of war in the Russian Empire, under the direction of the St. Petersburg Bible Society. To the English Bible Society at Amsterdam, for the poor British in the United Netherlands. To Eskelstone. To Catholics and their schools in Germany and Switzerland. To the poor Exiles from Hamburg in Holstein, Lubeck, and Bremen. To the Greeks and poor British in the Russian Empire.

Asia.

To the army, navy, and European inhabitants in the East Indies. To the Portuguese in Tanjore and other parts of India. To the islands of Ceylon and Java. To Aleppo and Smyrna. To Port Jackson in New South Wales, and to Van Dieman's Land. To China.

Africa.

To Siera Leone, and Bashia on the Rio Pongas. To the Cape of Good Hope, for the British soldiers, the converted Hottentots and others. To Senegal and Goree, for the use of the inhabitants and garrisons. To the Isles of France, Bourbon, and St. Helena.

America.

To the Mohawk and Esquimaux Indians. To New-York, for distribution by the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society, under the patronage of Bishop Moore; and to a similar Society at Albany. To Louisiana. To Newfoundland, Bermuda, Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, and various parts of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. To Jamaica, St. Kitt's, Demarara, Buenos Ayres, Chili, Surinam, and the Bay of Honduras. To Greenland.

III. The active zeal excited by the Institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society in various parts of the United Kingdom, for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures.

This zeal has displayed itself in the establishments of various Auxiliary and Branch Societies; and the sole aim of all is, the same as

that of the Parent Institution, to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures: for which purpose many of them have minutely investigated the wants of the poor, by inquiries from house to house, and have made arrangements for supplying those wants. Of these various Societies, those in Ireland have, as before-mentioned, received assistance from the British and Foreign Bible Society, while the others, whose local circumstances differ from the former, have aided its funds by liberal contributions. An enumeration of them, with their respective Patrons and Officers, will be given at the close of this Summary.

The associated exertions of Christians within the United Kingdom, for aiding the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, must be considered among the most pleasing effects produced by the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the zeal which gave rise to them has been equally manifested in the liberal support which the Society has received, not only from Auxiliary and Branch Societies, but from Congregational Collections in England, Wales, and Scotland.

Considering the poor throughout the United Kingdom as having particular claims on the Society, and anxious to supply their wants of the Holy Scriptures in the most effectual and economical manner, the Committee have invited Clergymen and other Ministers to encourage the formation of Bible Associations within their respective spheres, on a plan recommended for this purpose, and also to investigate the state of the poor in their several vicinities in respect to such wants. The degree to which the Holy Scriptures have

been already circulated in domestic channels by the adoption of this plan, is highly satisfactory, and the principle upon which the Bible Associations are formed, is more immediately calculated to bring the poorer classes into communication with the parent Society, and to excite a common feeling and interest among them for imparting to each other the blessing of divine knowledge; while, by purchasing the Bibles and Testaments at the *prime cost*, they leave the funds raised by the Auxiliary Societies disposable by the Parent Institution, for the accomplishment of its general and foreign objects.

Donations and Bequests, to a very large amount, by individuals, and the annual accession of new subscribers, are unequivocal proofs of the deep interest excited in the public mind, by an Institution which has, for its object, the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, with a view to the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

By the liberality of individuals, the Society also possesses a very valuable and useful collection of Bibles and Testaments, and works connected with Biblical Literature, in various languages.

PITCAIRN'S ISLAND.

(Concluded from p. 29.)

"This interesting new colony, it seemed, now consisted of about forty-six persons, mostly grown up young people, besides a number of infants. The young men, all born on the island, were very athletic, and of the finest forms, their countenances open and pleasing, indicating much benevolence and goodness of heart; but the young women were objects of particular ad-

miration, tall, robust, and beautifully formed, their faces beaming with smiles and unruffled good humour, but wearing a degree of modesty and bashfulness that would do honour to the most virtuous nation upon earth; their teeth, like ivory, were regular and beautiful, without a single exception; and all of them, both male and female, had the most marked English features. The clothing of the young females consisted of a piece of linen reaching from the waist to the knees, and generally a sort of mantle thrown loosely over the shoulders, and hanging as low as the ankles; but this covering appeared to be intended chiefly as a protection against the sun and the weather, as it was frequently laid aside—and then the upper part of the body was entirely exposed; and it is not possible to conceive more beautiful forms than they exhibited. They sometimes wore caps or bonnets for the head in the most tasty manner, to protect the face from the rays of the sun; and though, as Captain Pipon observes, they have only had the instruction of their Otaheitan mothers, our dress-makers in London would be delighted with the simplicity, and yet elegant taste, of these untaught females. Their native modesty, assisted by a proper sense of religion and morality instilled into their youthful minds, by John Adams, has hitherto preserved these interesting people perfectly chaste, and free from all kinds of debauchery. Adams assured the visitors, that since Christian's death, there had not been a single instance of any young woman proving unchaste; nor any attempt at seduction on the part of the men. They all labour while young in the cultivation of the

ground ; and when possessed of a sufficient quantity of cleared land, and of stock to maintain a family, they are allowed to marry, but always with the consent of Adams, who unites them by a sort of marriage-ceremony of his own.

“ The greatest harmony prevailed in this little society ; their only quarrels, and these rarely happened, being, according to their own expression, quarrels of the mouth. They are honest in their dealings, which consist of bartering different articles for mutual accommodation.—Their habitations are extremely neat. The little village of Pitcairn forms a pretty square ; the houses at the upper end of which are occupied by the Patriarch, John Adams, and his family, consisting of his old blind wife, and three daughters from fifteen to eighteen years of age, and a boy of eleven ; a daughter of his wife by a former husband, and a son-in-law. On the opposite side is the dwelling of Thursday October Christian ; and in the centre is a smooth verdant lawn, on which the poultry are let loose, fenced in so as to prevent the intrusion of the domestic quadrupeds.

“ All that was done was obviously undertaken on a settled plan, unlike to any thing to be met with on the other islands. In their houses, too, they had a good deal of decent furniture, consisting of beds laid upon bedsteads, with neat covering. They had also tables, and large chests to contain their valuables and clothing, which is made from the bark of a certain tree, prepared chiefly by the elder Otaheitan females. Adam's house consisted of two rooms, and the windows had shutters to pull to at night.—The younger part of the sex are, as before stated, employed

with their brothers, under the direction of their common father, Adams, in the culture of the ground which produced cocoa-nuts, bananas, the bread-fruit tree, yams, sweet potatoes, and turnips. They have also plenty of hogs and goats. The woods abound with a species of wild hog, and the coasts of the island with several kinds of good fish.

“ Their agricultural implements are made by themselves from the iron supplied by the Bounty, which with great labour they beat out into spades, hatchets, crows, &c. This was not all. The good old man kept a regular journal, in which was entered the nature and quantity of work performed by each family, what each had received, and what was due on account. There was, it seems, besides private property, a sort of general stock, out of which articles were issued, on account, to the several members of the community ; and for mutual accommodation, exchanges of one kind of provision for another were very frequent,—as salt for fresh provisions, vegetables and fruit for poultry, fish, &c. Also when the stores of one family were low, or wholly expended, a fresh supply was raised from another, or out of the general stock, to be repaid when circumstances were more favourable ;—all of which was carefully noted down in John Adam's journal.

“ But what was most gratifying of all to the visitors, was the simple and unaffected manner in which they returned thanks to the Almighty for the many blessings they enjoyed. They never failed to say grace before and after meals, to pray every morning at sun-rise, and they frequently repeated the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

"It was truly pleasing, says Captain Pipon, to see these poor people so well disposed to listen so attentively to moral instruction, to believe in the attributes of God, and to place their reliance on Divine goodness. The day on which the two captains landed, was Saturday the 17th of September; but by John Adam's account it was Sunday the 18th, and they were keeping the Sabbath, by making it a day of rest and of prayer. This was occasioned by the *Bounty* having proceeded thither by the eastern route, and our frigates having gone to the westward; and the *Topaz* found them right according to his own reckoning, she having also approached the island from the eastward. Every ship from Europe, proceeding to Pitcairn's Island round the Cape of Good Hope, will find them a day later—as those who approached them round Cape Horn a day in advance, as was the case with Captain Folger and the Captains Sir S. Staines and Pipon.

"The visit of the *Topaz* is of course, as a notable circumstance, marked down in John Adams's journal. The first ship that appeared off the island was on the 27th December, 1795; but as she did not approach the land, they could not make out to what nation she belonged. A second appeared some time after, but did not attempt to communicate with them. A third came sufficiently near to see the natives and their habitations, but did not attempt to send a boat on shore; which is the less surprising, considering the uniform ruggedness of the coast, the total want of shelter, and the almost constant and violent breaking of the sea against the cliffs. The good old man was anxious to

know what was going on in the old world, and they had the means of gratifying his curiosity by supplying him with some magazines and modern publications. His library consisted of the books that belonged to Admiral Bligh, but the visitors had not time to inspect them.

"They inquired particularly after Fletcher Christian. This ill-fated young man, it seems, was never happy after the rash and inconsiderate step which he had taken; he became sullen and morose, and practised the same kind of conduct towards his companions in guilt which he and they so loudly complained against in their late commander. Disappointed in his expectations at Otaheite and the Friendly-Islands, and most probably dreading a discovery, this deluded youth committed himself and his remaining confederates to the mere chance of being cast upon some desert island, and chance threw them upon that of Pitcairn. Finding no anchorage near it, he ran the ship upon the rocks, cleared her of the live stock, and other articles which they had been supplied with at Otaheite; when he set her on fire, that no trace of inhabitants might be visible, and all hope of escape cut off from himself and his wretched followers. His Otaheitan wife died within a twelvemonth from their landing, after which he carried off one that belonged to an Otaheitan man, who watched for an opportunity of taking his revenge, and shot him dead while digging in his own field. Thus terminated the miserable existence of this deluded young man, who was neither deficient in talent, nor energy, nor in connexions, and who might have risen in the service, and become an ornament to his profession.

“John Adams declared, as was natural enough he should do, his abhorrence of the crime in which he was implicated, and said that he was sick at that time in his hammock. This, we understand, is not true, though he was not particularly active in the mutiny. He expressed the utmost willingness to surrender himself and be taken to England: indeed, he rather seemed to have an inclination to revisit his native country; but the young men and women flocked round him, and with tears and intreaties begged that their father and protector might not be taken from them, for without him they must all perish. It would have been an act of the greatest inhumanity to remove him from the island: and it is hardly necessary to add, that Sir Thomas Staines lent a willing ear to their intreaties; thinking, no doubt, as we feel strongly disposed to think, that if he were even among the most guilty, his care and success in instilling religious and moral principles into the minds of this young and interesting society have, in a great degree, redeemed his former crimes.

“This island is about six miles long by three broad, covered with wood, and the soil of course very rich; situated under the parallel of 25° S. latitude, and in the midst of such a wide expanse of ocean, the climate must be fine and admirably adapted for the reception of all the vegetable productions of every part of the habitable globe. Small, therefore, as Pitcairn's island may appear, there can be little doubt that it is capable of supporting many inhabitants; and the present stock being of so good a description, we trust they will not be neglected. In the course of time,

the Patriarch must go hence; and we think it would be exceedingly desirable that the British Nation should provide for such an event, by sending out some zealous and intelligent instructor, together with a few persons capable of teaching the useful trades or professions. On Pitcairn Island there are better materials to work upon than missionaries have yet been so fortunate as to meet with, and the best results may reasonably be expected. Something we are bound to do for these blameless and interesting people. The articles recommended by Captain Pipon appear to be highly proper; cooking utensils, implements of agriculture, maize or the Indian corn, the orange tree from Valparaiso, a most grateful fruit in a warm climate, and not known in the Pacific Islands; and that root of plenty, not of poverty as a wretched scribler has called it, the Potatoe; Bibles, prayer-books, and a proper selection of other books, with paper, and other implements of writing. The visitors supplied them with some tools, kettles, and other articles, such as the high surf would permit them to land, but to no great extent: many things are still wanting for their ease and comfort. The descendants of these people, by keeping up the Otaheitan language, which the present race speak fluently, might be the means of civilizing the multitudes of fine people scattered over the innumerable Islands of the great Pacific. We have only to add, that Pitcairn's Island seems to be so fortified by nature as to oppose an invincible barrier to an invading enemy: there is no spot apparently where a boat can land with safety, and, perhaps not more than one where it can land at all: an

everlasting swell of the ocean rolls in on every side, and breaks into foam against its rocky and iron-bound shores."

The above account, notwithstanding some slight discrepancies which occur in the statement, and some difficulties which remain unexplained, is, without doubt, substantially correct. We understand that government intends to send a ship to visit this interesting colony, with a view to supply it with the articles which are most suited to its wants. We trust that, with a judicious selection of books, one or two discreet instructors, of general knowledge, enlarged views, and conciliating manners, and above all of solid and fervent piety, will be sent at the same time, to whom the spiritual and intellectual concerns of the amiable inhabitants may be safely committed. The object is one worthy of the utmost solicitude of the Church Missionary Society; and we shall rejoice to hear that it has taken under its special guardianship and protection this singular community, the members of which may be designed by Providence to be the evangelists of the Pacific Ocean.

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

A Narrative of the State of Religion, within the bounds of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; and of the General Associations of Connecticut, of New-Hampshire, of Massachusetts Proper, and of the General Convention of Vermont, during the last year.

The General Assembly, of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in giving to the churches under their care a detailed account of the state and prosperity of Zion, find themselves affected by the

emotions, in which joy and gratitude have the ascendancy.

A view of the operations of Divine grace in our churches during the past year, clearly demonstrates, not only that God is "*ever mindful of his covenant with his people*," that he will not forever hide his face from the children of his love, but also, that "*the time, even the set time to favour many parts of the American Zion has now come.*" If, when receiving a particular account of God's dealings with his people, we find, in some instances, that "*iniquity abounds, and the love of some who have professed to serve the Lord, has waxed cold; that stupidity, luke-warmness, deadness, or vice, have paralyzed the arm of religious exertion, or stopped the pulse of religious feeling,*" the General Assembly feel thankful to the great head of the church, that they are soon relieved from dwelling on these dark and depressing scenes. A brighter and more animating state of affairs soon rises to notice. Instances, in which "*the arm of the Lord has been signally revealed*" to many, who had been long "*sitting in the darkness of spiritual death,*" or benumbed by a death-like lethargy and indifference to spiritual concerns, gild the prospects, inspire with hope, encourage and animate us to wait for the divine blessing in the way of God's appointment, and in the use of those means which he has designated.

In noticing the events, which have transpired during the past year, the general Assembly cannot but regard them as characteristic of a new and highly interesting æra of the church of Christ. They can state from information received from different sections of the church, that *infidelity stalks abroad*

with a less confident and unblushing aspect, than in times past; that "intemperance and profanity have become less frequent, and that a decent and respectful attention is generally paid to the external duties of piety. True it is, that this state of things does not *every where* prevail. In some sections of the church the people of God are mourning and in tears, because the SABBATH of the Lord is not hallowed, and because, instead of "remembering to keep it holy," some continue to do their own pleasure, and attend to secular pursuits on this holy day! TRAVELLING ON THE LORD'S DAY is not uniformly nor carefully avoided; and, though, in SOME parts of our land, this sin is reprobated and punished, (and the General Assembly mention this fact in the language of commendation, and in hopes that it will receive notice, and imitation,) yet, in OTHERS, it is regarded as of a *venial* character, and committed with but little compunction! The General Assembly advert to this, for the purpose of expressing the sense which they entertain of it, as a flagrant violation of express and commanded duty; as calculated to provoke the Divine indignation, and to bring down the heaviest judgments!

It is with pleasure, however, that the general Assembly can report the harmony, the union, and the peace, of the Church; the fidelity of its ministers; and the instances of exemplary piety, of fervent zeal, and of generous and devoted attachment to the cause of the Redeemer, which are presented to their notice. "The Garden of God" has been copiously watered with showers of Divine Grace: many trees planted in it, have at-

tained the strength and beauty of the "Cedars of Lebanon," and brought forth fruit abundantly. Amongst the MEANS which God has especially blessed to the conversion of sinners, and to the edification and increase of his Church, — *Catechetical Instruction, Sunday Schools, and Bible Classes*, deserve a special notice.

In most congregations, the youthful mind has been directed to that "form of sound words" contained in the *Catechisms* of our Church, and thus supplied with materials to comfort and protect them in riper years, as well as to guide them in the morning of life. If the testimony of EXPERIENCE be listened to on this head, it will pronounce loudly in favour of communicating instruction by means of *Catechisms*; for IT proclaims that God has hitherto greatly blessed this mode of imparting religious knowledge.

Sunday Schools also occupy a prominent situation in the details of the occurrences of the past year. In several portions of our land these Schools have been constituted for the instruction of the poor and ignorant. The moments of holy domestic leisure which occur on the Lord's Day, are appropriated to this laudable undertaking. Multitudes of the ignorant and the young, having been led to the fountains of human knowledge, and taught to read the word of life, have been conducted, by their benevolent instructors, to the Temple of the living God, to seek for that knowledge by which they may "become wise unto salvation." In the city of Philadelphia, more than five thousand CHILDREN, as well as many aged persons, are instructed in this manner. In New-York, the youthful pupils exceed

four thousand.—And, when noticing and approving this laudable, and (in our country) novel mode of instructing those “who were ready to perish, and had none to help them,” it would be ungenerous and unjust not to award the meed of applause where it has been so richly merited, to declare, that “the DAUGHTERS of Zion” have done nobly in this undertaking.—They have certainly performed a conspicuous and important part, and deserve well of the friends of humanity, and religion. They have thus been the honoured instruments of “*plucking* many of our race, as brands out of the everlasting burning;” and rendering them useful and ornamental members of civil society, and blessings to the Church of God! May the prayers of the widow, and the blessings of the fatherless, attend and stimulate them to farther exertions!

“*Bible Classes*” have been formed in different sections of the church; and the object of their formation has been to render the young and ignorant familiar with the volume of Holy Writ: and so great has been the aptitude, which has been manifested, that some of the children have been able to repeat to their instructors, at a *single recitation*, several hundred verses of the sacred volume.

Bible and Tract Societies have greatly multiplied in our country, during the last year. From Georgia to Maine, endeavours have been made to convey the Word of Life; the consolations, and support of the Gospel, to the remotest cottage on our borders: They, who have been long sitting in the darkness of the shadow of death—without the light of revelation,—ignorant of what the Gospel of

Christ has done, and what it can do, are no longer in this distressing situation! The lamp of revelation now shines in many a hitherto gloomy mansion; and illuminates, and directs, and cheers many a hitherto darkened soul! In the distribution of religious *Tracts*, (in which the *reality* and *power* of Godliness have appeared, as manifested in the lives, and death of eminent Christians) a Divine blessing has been evident, and encouragement communicated not to become weary in this species of “*well doing*.”

The General Assembly record with gratification, and heartfelt pleasure, the information they have received of the formation of an “*American Bible Society*” a few days since in the city of New-York; and from the unanimity manifested by all denominations of Christians on that occasion, the fervour of zeal displayed, and eagerness manifested by the numerous, and highly respectable delegation, which attended to *combine* their exertions in promoting the best interests of their fellow-men, by furnishing them with the word of life—they cannot but believe that it is the “work of God” that it will stand, and prove a rich blessing to those, who may enjoy the fruits of its exertions.

Of the benefits resulting from MORAL SOCIETIES, the Assembly are fully sensible, and willingly testify their approbation of the OBJECT to effect which their exertions are directed; and when it is stated that these societies have been instrumental, with the Divine blessing, in repressing and discountenancing profanity, intemperance, Sabbath breaking, and other notorious vices, farther inducements need not be mentioned

to those, who study the peace and prosperity of the church, and good order of society, to impel them to promote their formation, and to effect their object.

Missionary exertions, during the last year, have been numerous, and efficacious. The hearts of many have been opened to "devise liberal things in behalf of those who are perishing for lack of knowledge." In addition to the missionary societies existing, at the time of our last report, several new societies have been formed, and new labourers sent into the "*whitened fields*." The reports received on this subject, are of an encouraging complexion, and calculated to excite to more vigorous exertions in the Gospel vineyard.

By the last General Assembly, it was recommended to the churches to join in "*monthly concerts of prayer*," to unite in earnest supplication for the speedy coming of the kingdom of the Redeemer, and for the extension of the triumphs of the Gospel of Christ. This recommendation has met with a very general attention;—Christians of *other* denominations than our own, have cordially united with us in this interesting service. God has been entreated of by his people;—he has heard their prayers;—he has answered their petitions, and blessed their souls.

Several *conversions* to God, in individual cases, and several *revivals* of religion in societies, may be traced to these seasons of social prayer. In many places, "*devout and pious FEMALES*" have formed themselves into praying societies, and obtained in the discharge of duty—comfort to themselves, and light, and direction to others.

The state of the church during the last year; its growth, and

prosperity; the zeal and diligence of its members; the outpourings of the Spirit of God; the conviction and conversion of multitudes, who had hitherto been "dead in trespasses and sins;" the language of "praise which has burst from the mouth of babes and sucklings;" these have been of a character calculated to excite the strains of holy gratitude, and to cause us to exclaim, "These are the Lord's doings, and wondrous in our eyes!"

In passing from south to north, the General assembly find in most places, a decent and respectful attention to the ordinary means of grace:—and in *some*—a special work, and extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In the city of *Philadelphia*, a very animating revival commenced in January last. A deep, silent, and awful work—attended by pungent convictions of sinfulness, and misery, continued for some length of time. The good work still progresses!

Within the bounds of the Presbytery of New-Brunswick, the General Assembly have found much to gladden the heart. Trenton and Bound Brook have been visited with times of refreshing from the Divine Presence. In *Baskenridge* the spirit of the Lord has been poured out in copious effusions. The good work, which commenced in the *Academy*, was soon extended to the church generally. A goodly number of the students of that institution, as well as many others, have joined themselves to the Lord.

In *Morristown*, within the bounds of the PRESBYTERY OF JERSEY, a work of grace commenced in August last, which has been slow and gradual in its progress, and

deep and solemn in its effect. It yet continues, and the numbers of its subjects is very considerable.

From the Presbytery of *New-York*, information has been received of a highly gratifying character. In the brick church in the city of New-York, God has been pleased to pour out his spirit, and to produce a very general enquiry—"What shall we do to be saved?" This attention to eternal concerns commenced towards the close of the last year, and has rapidly and steadily increased from that time to the present. The subjects of this work are almost exclusively youth—the majority females—but an unusual proportion males.

Accounts of a similar character have been received from the Presbytery of *Hudson*. In the congregation of *Goshen*—the revival, before existing, has greatly increased. In the congregation of *Scotchtown*, *Westown*, *Florida*, and *Amity*, the marks of Divine footsteps have been very visible. Numbers have been brought to bow to the Sceptre of King Jesus, and to embrace the humbling doctrines of the Cross.

In the city of *Albany*, a Divine influence has been exerted, and the houses of the living God thronged with earnest and devout worshippers! Such also has been the case at *Catskill*.

The city of *Troy*, (within the bounds of the Presbytery of *Columbia*), has also been abundantly watered by refreshing showers of heavenly grace, and numbers have been added to the flock of Christ. The hearts of the ministers of the Gospel have been filled with joy, and their hands with employment.

As it would swell the details of this report beyond all reasonable bounds, to give even a concise nar-

rative of all the revivals of religion, which have taken place, within the past year, in the churches under their care,—the General Assembly regret, they can only mention the names of other Presbyteries, within the bounds of which, the Spirit of God has been poured out in a remarkable manner—of this number are the Presbyteries of *Winchester*, *Long-Island*, *Oneida*, *Onondaga*, *Champlain*, *Geneva*, and *Cayuga*.

Whilst detailing the particular growth of the Redeemer's kingdom, the General Assembly rejoice to find a missionary spirit arising in the breasts of the young men, who are attached to the *Theological Seminary* at *Princeton*; and they cherish a rational hope that this seminary will prove "a school of Prophets,"—who shall proclaim Christ the way of salvation to perishing sinners, and consolation to the weary, waiting soul.

In connection with this subject—the Assembly have to state from information communicated to this body, the existence of a seminary for the instruction of Theological students, established at *Hampden Sydney*, under the patronage of the synod of *Virginia*, which it is hoped will in due season, furnish able and faithful labourers in the vineyard of our common Lord.

Several of the *Colleges* of our land have been graciously visited, and the salt of grace cast into these fountains, from which "streams may flow to make glad the city of our God." The moral habits of the youth in *Union College* are very encouraging. Two societies meet every week for "social worship," besides occasional meetings for prayer. Several instances of hopeful conversion have occurred in this seminary during the last year.

From Massachusetts Proper, we learn, that the concert of prayer; the diffusion of the holy scriptures and religious tracts; the propagation of the gospel among the destitute in our own country, and in pagan climes; and the suppression of immoral practices; are objects, which are cherished with great fervour and success! And we would record with joy and gratitude, the numerous and animating revivals of religion, which have blessed many of the congregations in the counties of Hampshire, Hamden, and Berkshire, and in other parts of the state, and which have introduced hundreds into the bosom of the Christian church. The Theological Institution at Andover is stated to be in a flourishing condition; and a society has been lately formed in this state, which promises to afford efficient aid to pious and indigent young men, whose hearts God has inclined to the gospel ministry.

The General Assembly learn with pleasure from the delegation from the General Association of CONNECTICUT, that attention to religion in that quarter, exceeds any thing of the kind, which has ever before been witnessed. About one-sixth part of the whole number of towns in that state have been visited in an *extraordinary* manner, and multitudes have become the subjects of a lively hope. There also, Missionary, Bible, Tract, Moral, and Praying Societies, are numerous and flourishing.

In VERMONT, "God has not forgotten to be gracious to his church." In the course of the past year, revivals of religion have occurred in a number of towns on the eastern side of the mountain, and also in the western part of the

state, particularly in the towns bordering on the lake.

NEW HAMPSHIRE, has also been blessed with revivals. In several towns, a special work of grace has been begun, and continues to progress. Concerts for prayer have been attended, and blessed to the conversion of careless sinners, and to the comfort and edification of God's own people!

On a review of the whole, we have reason for adoring gratitude and deep humility; "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name, O God! shall this glorious and gracious work be ascribed!" Many whose heads are whitened with age, who have long borne the heat and burden of the day, in the Gospel vineyard, declare that never have such exhilarating reports of the prosperity of Zion sounded in *their* ears, nor such bright prospects met *their* eyes. "Blessed then are your eyes, for what they see, and your ears for what they hear."

Let all be encouraged to diligence, to watchfulness, and prayer, to wait upon God in the use of his appointed means, and to pray for the special outpouring of his Holy Spirit. Brethren, the promise is sure; wait for it; it will come; it will not tarry!

Published by order of the General Assembly,

JACOB J. JANEWAY,
Stated Clerk.

Philadelphia, May, 1816.

The Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church of this State, closed its session in this city last Thursday. We understand that by an unanimous vote of the Convention, application is to be made to the Rt. Rev. Bishop HOBART,

of New-York, to superintend the ecclesiastical concerns of the church in this state; and for the present to connect the diocese of Connecticut with that of New-York.

In point of numbers and talents, the Convention was highly respectable; and it is to be hoped, that the wishes of so respectable a body of men, and we may say the wishes of the Episcopalians generally, will, if possible, be gratified by the Bishop.

The following clergymen have been appointed by the Episcopal Convention of this State as Delegates to the next General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States, to wit: Rev. Daniel Burhans, Rev. Harry Crosswell, Rev. Roger Searle, Rev. Tillotson Bronson: And the following Lay Delegates—Elijah Boardman, Asa Chapman, Charles Sigourney, and Burrage Beach, Esquires.

Register.

Extract of a letter from New-Orleans to the Editor.

“This is a land of darkness; but it contains a few witnesses of the light. We have formed a little fragment of the universal concert of prayer on the first Monday evening in each month. We have also a weekly prayer meeting established—but we need the faithful ministry of the word. New-Orleans and the state of Louisiana present considerable openings for missions, and in that respect is less favoured than Indostan. Our Bible Society is beginning to be useful. Several thousand copies of the precious Scriptures have been already circulated in the English, French, and Spanish languages; all of which are separately spoken in different parts of Louisiana. A great missionary field will soon

present itself in the country of Mexico, from our own borders to the Isthmus of Darien; and we may say, the whole region of Spanish America.”

Extract of a letter to the Editor of the Religious Intelligencer, from his correspondent at Smyrna, Chenango County, N. Y. dated June, 1.

“A great and marvellous work of the God of all Grace is going on in this part of the land. An awakening commenced in Sherburne, about eight weeks since, in the East Congregational Society; and to-morrow fifty-four expect to be added to the Church. The awakening has become quite general and extended to the West Society of the same denomination. There will be five or six added to this church on the morrow. There are many others rejoicing in hope, who have not yet applied for membership in any church. An unusual solemnity is apparent in this town, and in most towns adjacent. It is a day in which the children of God rejoice, and infidels tremble.”

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

An interesting account of the Revival of Religion in Lenox, Mass. will appear in our next.

The Editor, having but just commenced his labours, he hopes to have more room hereafter for Communications, and to give earlier notice of Passing Events.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

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